

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

At the Annual Meeting of the Town of Sprowston held at Sprowston Diamond Centre, School Lane, Sprowston on 15 May 2019, the following were present:-

Mr I Moncur - Chairman of the Council
Mrs J Hunt - Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Mr G Ranaweera - Town Clerk Designate
Mrs E Elliot - Committee Officer

Mr K Leggett - District Councillor Old Catton and Sprowston West

10 Local Government Electors of the Town

19/01. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 25 April 2018, having been circulated to all residents' present, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman of the Council.

19/02. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

19/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL

"I am very pleased to be introducing this year's annual report. This is the fourth occasion that I have presented a report to you and it comes at the end of my term as Councillor and Chairman of Sprowston Town Council.

Starting with our parks and open spaces, Windsor Park Gardens has benefitted from a new enlarged play area incorporating a wider range of play equipment and new tarmac pathways.

The Council has taken over responsibility for the play area and open space at Blue Boar Lane from Norfolk Homes. Improvements include bull nosed railings incorporating an additional access point at the front, tarmac pathways and soft landscaping.

At Sprowston Recreation Ground an orchard, dedicated to preserve old and endangered varieties of fruit trees, has been planted in an enclosed area behind the tennis courts, which will be opened to the public when mature. And the pedestrian access, between the library and tennis courts, has been hard landscaped making it easier for wheelchairs, pushchairs and prams and safer for pedestrians.

A tree survey of all the Council's trees under its responsibility has been carried out including the newest acquired woodland at Gurney Drive where arboreal work has been undertaken however, further works are required before it can be opened to the public.

Moving on to the cemetery we anticipate that there is approximately 8 years of burial space available before moving into the extension by which time the planting will be well established.

19/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

Next door demand for an allotment has increased, probably due to housing development in Sprowston, and our waiting list now stands at 40 residents.

With regards to our streetlighting the council commissioned a safety survey of all 856 lamp columns and is now reviewing the results.

Since the last Town Meeting the Town Council has submitted observations on over 85 planning applications. When commenting on planning applications the Town Council seeks to improve highways and car parking arrangements and for developers to contribute to the provision of other benefits for the residents of Sprowston.

Over the past year the Town Council Cinema has continued to show, on a monthly basis, a variety of film genres to entertain the regular filmgoers and hopefully encourage new visitors. The films are booked on a four monthly basis so there is a little bit of a guessing game on the success of the titles towards the end of the booking period. Although well attended, moviegoers are always welcome.

As to financial matters, the Council makes every effort to ensure its funds are used wisely and that residents receive a high level of service. It is always a difficult decision to increase the annual precept but this allows the Council to continue to maintain the facilities provided for all residents.

Having agreed the 2019/20 budget and to meet its funding requirements the Council has increased cemetery and memorial fees by 4%, allotment rent by £1.00 per annum and an increase of £2.00 on one room at Sprowston Diamond Centre to bring it in line with others available for hire.

There was no increase on sports hire fees and use of the tennis courts continues to be free.

The precept was set at £650.355 and the cost for services to the average band D property in Sprowston is £117.01 per year an increase of 1.99%.

The Town Council has continued to support local organisations with much needed grant funding and this year organisations supported included:

£5,000 to Sprowston Youth Engagement
£100 to Norfolk Age UK
£300 to The Royal British Legion
£100 to National Accidents Rescue Services
and £500 to Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau

Moving on to buildings the roof at Sparhawk Park has undergone repair following vandalism, and the Council property at Sprowston Recreation Ground was refurbished in preparation for the relocation of the office in August.

Our new offices are more accessible for all and enables a more professional public interface. It has also enabled Council meetings to be held in a dedicated meeting room allowing greater space for members of the public to attend; and freeing a room at Sprowston Diamond Centre for hire.

19/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

However, the highlight for me this year was to officially open Sprowston Diamond Centre a fabulous new facility for the community. There has already been significant interest in hire at the centre and many activities are already taking place including yoga, pilates, ballet, band practice, sewing, badminton and fitness classes, to name but a few.

Now onto other matters of interest in the parish, to commemorate the 100 anniversary of WWI the Town Council, in collaboration with Reverend Canon Stokes, arranged and paid for the War Memorial at St. Cuthbert's Church to be refurbished and cleaned. A teak inscribed bench was also placed at Sprowston cemetery commemorating WWI.

Following complaints from residents about speeding the Council has been presented with two Westcotec Data Equipped Signs (SAM 2), funded from Councillor John Ward and Councillor Karen Vincent's County Council annual Local Members Funding Scheme budget.

They are regularly placed in various locations around the parish on roads identified by Councillors and residents as hotspots.

As well as displaying the vehicle speed to drivers they record data including; daily, weekly and monthly vehicle counts, speed averages and maximum speeds amongst other statistics.

I would like to conclude my report by thanking Councillors who have attended meetings and especially those who have chaired and attended working groups, and all Council office and grounds staff for all they do to keep the town running well.

Most particularly, I thank our Town Clerk, June Hunt for her vision, dedication, expertise, diligence and sheer hard work at all times. On a personal note, I thank June for her assistance, guidance and unfailing support to me during my term as chairman.

I would also like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Council to wish June a long and happy retirement and to welcome Guy Ranaweera who was appointed in March and will take over the reins on 31 May 2019. I am sure we are in safe hands."

19/04. INVITED GUESTS

Mr J Fleetwood read a detailed report from Broadland Tree Wardens, Ben Jervis and Christine Hipperson.

19/05. RESIDENTS, DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

Referring to the non-turf cricket pitch a resident commented that he had not seen it in use and wondered if the Council had priced themselves out of the market.

The Town Clerk responded that the pitch had not been as popular as hoped with traditional teams however, the Council was exploring more business and casual hire and was taking advice regarding a pricing structure to reflect the change in the needs of cricket teams.

19/06. CLOSE

There being no other necessary business the Chairman concluded by thanking residents for attending and then declared the meeting closed.

26 May 2021

Chairman